



PEDESTRIANS WERE CONSPICUOUS by their absence when Jack Carpenter flew over Acton near noon hour on a recent weekend photographing the north-west end of town. The school creek runs down through the centre of the picture, past the Robert Little school and the public library where stream improvements can be easily picked out. Upper left is Warren Grove while the industrial plants of Building

Products, Blow Press and A.P. Green can be seen upper right. Centre are the Acton Hydro offices and workshop, Dills Printing and Publishing and Thompson's Motors is seen bottom right, nestled behind St. Alban's Church. The plant of H. K. Porter sticks a portion into the top left of the picture while Bower Avenue runs north past the post office to the right.

Bill Smiley



Well, we ventured into Sodom or Gomorrah recently, and escaped with nothing worse than a case of pop. Or thirteen cases, to be exact.

We just had to visit our daughter at university because she's lonely. This is the Old Battleaxe's story, and Kim aids and abets with sly innuendoes in her letters.

How anybody can be lonely when she's living in a house with 13 other girls is beyond the simple comprehension of a male parent.

Maybe she is lonely, but her real reason for wanting us to go down and see her is that she knows she's going to get a night in a hotel room, have a smashing good dinner, and see a show, none of which is included in her budget.

The day before we were to go, my muffer blew. This, coupled with dire weather warnings and my phobia about the city, made me suggest cancelling the trip. Nothing doing.

Turned out to be the worst weekend for driving this winter, and that's a big statement. However, we made it. Had a room reserved, but had forgotten about the big political convention.

The hotel lobby was chaos. Wild-eyed room clerks. Red-eyed conventioners arguing over the bills they had run up, which they had signed with a flourish for food and drink before the rusty dawn on the last day. Not a bell-hop to be had.

Finally got a key. The people had checked out, said the flunkey, but the room wasn't made up yet. All we wanted to do was relax after a 150 mile bad drive, so we found our way up. Not only was the room not made up, it was still occupied. But the residents, a charming couple from Ottawa, let us in while they finished packing.

Both the room and the couple looked like the tail-end of a convention. It was actually two adjoining rooms and they looked like a scene from Ten Nights in a Bar-room. Not the people, the rooms.

This had been a "hospitality room", it turned out. That is a polite way of saying a place where the drinks, usually supplied as a public relations deal by the distillers, are free for every moocher who arrives, as well as the hard-working politicians.

There was still plenty of booze, and about 18 cartons of mix. There was one made-up bed in the two rooms. The rest of the space was a conglomerate of glasses, bars, desks, placards and posters.

Sam, the husband, was a fairly big wheel organizer. He was tottering with fatigue and sounded as though he had swallowed two pounds of sand, after four days and nights of working for the cause.

But within twenty minutes we were fast friends. At four p.m., they informed us that they had to meet their son and his wife at the station. They got away about 4.15, leaving us with the chores of telling their son where they might meet him, and protecting the booze that was left.

Everything worked fine. Son phoned, got the message. Booze men, looking like a couple of hotel dicks, picked up the hooch, giving us the cold, suspicious stare. I hadn't taken a single jug, so help me. My wife wouldn't let me.

But they wouldn't take the mix. Cartons and cartons and bottles and bottles of it. We sat around desolately in the wreckage for three hours, waiting for the maids to come. Finally, the Old Lady got sore, phoned the desk and demanded action. We were given another room.

But leave all that mix? Not an old prisoner of war. We carted 13 cases with us, after giving several to a raucous party from Timmins, across the hall, who had been ogling and whistling at wife and daughter, to former's delight and latter's amusement.

Settled in new room. Knock on the door. Family of four entered. They had been given same room. Dad exhausted, mother distraught, teen-age daughter excited and 12-year-old son sitting sullenly in corner, muttering "Never trust an alcoholic". Give them a drink. Buddies in no time. But they still had no room.

Saw show. Wife shocked at nude scene. Checked out next day with 13 cases of mix, about \$35 worth. "Real Hicks", said the bell-boys' arrogant glares. Carried it off with aplomb.

Dropped Kim and eight cartons of ginger ale and cola at her residence. Arrived home with five of soda and tonic water. Drop around, and bring your own booze. Any time. We're set for mix.

From the editor's desk . . .

Toronto writers and planners, fed up with Montreal being the largest city and largest metropolitan area in Canada, have discovered a new way of overtaking the Quebec metropolis by merely expanding their horizons.

Population figures released last week show that Metro Toronto's population stood at 2,609,638, representing a growth of 16 per cent, while Metropolitan Montreal with a count of 2,720,413 could boast only an increase of six per cent since 1966. The gap between the two metros has now closed to a mere 110,000 people — or a city approximately the size of Kitchener.

Nothing startling about that. You're right! Toronto is expanding mightily. In fact the doors of Metro Toronto are now right on our threshold — at Milton.

You guessed it — Milton was included in the Toronto figures — and Oakville,

Streetsville, Brampton and all the area in between. Somehow they missed counting Georgetown but they did get Oshawa and its environs to the east.

Interpreters of the census in Toronto are still obsessed with the idea "bigger is better". They won't rest until the day the Queen City is the largest in Canada.

We'll have to be on our guard. The next census may see Acton as part of Toronto.

You say they wouldn't want us?

Hope so — although I have to admit Toronto is an attractive, exciting city.

Talking the other day with Jack Carpenter about the value of money and the favors it will buy. Jack says one thing money can't buy is poverty. Shut me up, good.

Mayor Les Dudy is convinced the

Toronto to Georgetown GO train service is a cinch to expand to Acton and Guelph. "A service stopping at Georgetown doesn't make sense," he told members of the Hydro Commission last week.

"We've got it made. It'll be an automatic extension," he said.

GO trains are losing propositions, of course, and must be subsidized by the Ontario Government. But the day will come when the service will be the fastest and most convenient way of getting to the core of Toronto. It may then make money.

Public transportation is again going to be an integral part of communications. We will still need highways and cars but on a lesser scale. There may be many more "Spadina expressway" incidents at government level, although in my view the first one was a farce. All the cars on Toronto streets on their way to and from downtown are still

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Thorny hydro line route . . .

Ontario Hydro's proposed 500 k.v. transmission line is one bone of contention residents of Erin, Nassagaweya and Eramosa townships could chew over for several months if the selling tide of opposition to the precise location of the line continues to build.

The line will cross the three townships on a route that carves a 640 foot swath through farmland and affects plans and aspirations of many farmers and land owners in the townships. Naturally, the people affected are concerned, picturing an unsightly network of towers will spoil the aesthetics of the countryside. There are other objections, too.

One man from Erin township told the Free Press he has planted acres of trees on his property and the line could mean they will all be destroyed, ending a long term project that took planning and a desire to do something about preserving the ecology of the township.

Former Nassagaweya councillor Alan Ackman has called the line "visual pollution." His farm is on the proposed route and he honestly acknowledges a vested interest about the project.

Provincial Treasurer Darcy Keough in a status report on the Toronto-Centred Region last August

revealed the Government had considered the possibility of using the Parkway Belt for Hydro's 500 k.v. transmission line, which is to run between the Nanticoke and Pickering crating stations.

"Unfortunately," the report says, "this possibility was ruled out for technical reasons related mainly to the problems of underground transmission in the vicinity of the airport."

Questioned by this writer, Mr. McKeough said Ontario Hydro had changed their thinking about the transmission line developing new types of towers that blended with the landscape, which in his view would appeal more to land owners along the route than the unsightly steel structures formerly used.

Despite new concepts in towers there are still going to be many unhappy people when the line traverses their properties. It does seem unfortunate the proposed route cuts across farmland, instead of following a major highway or existing power belt.

Apparently Hydro has done some thinking about this and the major objection to township counter route proposals has been cost. There are other problems which Hydro apparently is willing to discuss with

township representatives. They should include people affected by the line in their discussions, too.

We think most people would acquiesce with Hydro's thinking that the line must go through to provide needed power for the province. However, the route should be one that best suits the purpose and disrupts the least amount of people.

If Ontario Hydro is to adapt the Bill Davis approach and think about the effects hydro lines and Spadina Expressways have on people and environment they will participate in much discussion and do much thinking before they bulldoze the project through.

In the meantime, the voices of those who oppose the proposed route of the line would carry much more emphasis and authority if they originated from one source instead of several emanating from various townships. We would recommend opposition of the line get together and face Hydro with a united front rather than a welter of conflicting voices which could antagonize officials and force the issue through without adequate discussion and planning.

Council did the right thing . . .

Acton council's decision to accept in principle the sale of 48 acres of town-owned land to Alteo Construction for \$104,000 was motivated in part by the desire to consummate an earlier agreement and partly to ensure that the town acquires some much needed low cost housing.

Councillor Peter Marks, meanwhile, has been doing some research on the sale and he says that the price council was asking might have been fair when the first deal went through but circumstances have changed. The price is ridiculously low for prime residential land now, he contends.

We commend Councillor Marks for his attitude that the taxpayer is entitled to get the maximum amount for town-owned land. The money is slated for town coffers which could use a little replenishing. But we cannot agree fully with his stand.

The developer is entitled to some consideration in this matter. He offered

the \$104,000 in the first instance with the understanding all the acreage would be zoned residential and he could go ahead with development, planning for a condominium development which would be within the reach of the average Acton family's pocketbook. It was the conservation branch at Queens Park which messed up the deal with its insistence that some of the land must be zoned for conservation. The Conservation people apparently envisioned a flood on the property, although the possibility is as remote as a wave from the drinking fountain on Mill St.

The developer asked for a three month extension on the agreement of purchase in March of this year when he was supposed to pay \$20,000 at sale closing. Council rejected the extension, deciding they had carried out their obligations on the sale.

The developer felt he could not go ahead until he was assured most of the land was rezoned residential. There

were rumors at that time that almost half the land would be zoned conservation and it was a precaution on his part that he was not paying for land he could never use.

In our view the developer made the original offer in good faith and the town is obligated to carry out its end of the deal. Council has now fulfilled its obligation.

At the same time we agree with Councillors Marks, Masales and Elliott that some safeguards should have been included in the deal to ensure if the land is sold again it goes back to the town at the original bid—or lower. We would also have liked to see some assurance that low cost housing will be built on the property to fill a very real Acton need.

The onus is now on the developer to show he is acting in good faith and will fulfill the unwritten parts of the agreement. He has always displayed a willingness to co-operate before so there should be no reason now why he wouldn't continue to do so.

Free Press back issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, November 22, 1951.

A free bingo in the town hall, sponsored by Liberal candidate Dr. Deans, was well attended.

Smouldering coals and feed piles and 20 blackened chicken brooders were all that remained of the 200 by 20 foot frame chicken house levelled by fire near Everton Sunday. The \$16,000 blaze wiped out 5,000 chickens on the farm of Adam Szady-Bey. Firemen of the Rockwood brigade got water from a neighbor's farm.

Several hundred Acton ladies combined learning many cooking hints and winning many prizes Tuesday and Wednesday evenings when the Duke of Devonshire chapter of the I.O.D.E. sponsored a Robin

Hood cooking school in the town hall. R. Parker was master of ceremonies the first night and George Mason the second, both assisted by Mrs. A. Long, regent of the chapter. There were many prizes. Mothers of twins Mrs. G. Mason and Mrs. Garrett were given boxes of Nutrim and colored dishes. Mrs. Sirrs had the nearest 25th anniversary; Mrs. S. Braida had the nearest birthday with Marjorie Hall second; Mrs. J. Mowat was the oldest lady present; Robert Darby won a mixer and Mrs. Masales won flowers for being married 50 years.

John Goy was elected president of the Acton Minor Sports club succeeding Ken Blow. Other officers are Ernie Marks, Dr. Sirrs, Dr. Oakes, Corp. Mason, Bill Holloway, Vic Masters, Doug Coleman. There will be only minor hockey here again this semester leaving fans starving again.

The Baxter Lab hockey team won a rough game against Norval in Georgetown arena.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, November 24, 1921.

After making a brave fight for life for many months in Christie St. Military hospital, Sgt.-Major Norman Stuckey passed away Tuesday of last week. As a result of trying experiences during the war his heart was misplaced and his death was attributed to this. He went overseas in 1914. With indomitable courage he continued his employment but six months ago was obliged to enter hospital.

The New Wonderland deserves credit for presenting "Damaged Goods" to an adult audience, a lesson of the terrible havoc wrought by venereal diseases.

The Corporation and Mr. Amos Mason of Alton are getting together in the matter of opening a knitting mill in Acton. He is willing to start in the electric power house building. He is an experienced woollen man. He has secured a home here. Mr. and Mrs. Mason will be quite an acquisition to the town and will be cordially welcomed to Mr. Mason's boyhood home.

Limehouse Boys' Club re-organized last week and with the following officers: Mentor Mr. D. M. Gowdy; chief Arthur

Benton; Tally Sam Gisby; Cache Arthur Lane.

It is a favorite drive now over to the Guelph Line to see the Nassagaweya monument.

Knox Sunday School Bible class had 71 men and women in attendance this week. Governor McNab of the jail at Guelph died of injuries after being attacked by three inmates.

Some say there is "no fun" at political meetings any more. 20 or 30 years ago the candidates washed dirty linen at every meeting and there was often a free-for-all.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, November 28, 1896.

Merry sleigh bells enliven the neighborhood. Skaters were out on Monday.

Mr. J. A. Cornfield had his right wrist badly cut while ejecting a drunken man from his store.

The firemen are always on the alert to protect our interests. Let us encourage them by our presence at their concert tonight.

Firstbrook's fish hatchery is already beginning to yield returns. Mr. Firstbrook shipped this week 5,000 young trout to London.

It is estimated that over 60 dogs have been destroyed in Paris. How would it do to get up a hydrophobia scare in Acton?

Now Guelph council have reversed their recent vote when Mr. Moore was fairly elected and named Alderman Scroggie the new city treasurer. Verily, this notorious council is keeping up its reputation for farcical and unbusinesslike transaction of affairs pertaining to the good city of Guelph.

A. T. Brown carries a new and well-assorted stock of English, French and American perfumes: White Rose, New Mown Hay, Jockey Club, Violet Flowers, Crab Apple Blossom, Cleopatra, Swiss Lilac, Victoria Regina, American Flag and Carnation. In bulk or bottle.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Henderson, M.P. went to Glencoe last week where Mrs. Henderson's sister lies very low with consumption.

Thanksgiving Day today. Several shooting matches are planned.

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